

Winning the Stream War: An Empirical Comparison of Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar in the Indonesian Market

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has transformed consumer behavior in accessing entertainment, with subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) services emerging as a dominant choice. This study compares Indonesian consumers' perceptions of two leading SVOD platforms, Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar, across five key variables: user experience, subscription price, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. A quantitative approach was employed using purposive sampling, involving 180 respondents who had subscribed to both services within the past 12 months. Data were analyzed using SPSS and the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. Results reveal significant differences across all variables, with Netflix scoring higher than Disney+ Hotstar in each. These findings indicate that Netflix outperforms Disney+ Hotstar in delivering superior user experience, value for price, subscription intention, customer satisfaction, and loyalty among Indonesian consumers. This aligns with consumer behavior and marketing theories highlighting the influence of experience, pricing, and motivation on satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Intention to Subscribe, Subscription Price, User Experience

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way consumers access and experience entertainment. Subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD) platforms have emerged as dominant players, offering convenient access to diverse content anytime and anywhere. Globally, streaming services now represent the largest share of the media market, with revenues projected to reach over USD 2.5 trillion by 2032, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 17.8% (Duarte, 2025). In Indonesia, the SVOD market is expected to generate USD 955.9 million by 2027, driven by a growing subscriber base and rising demand for localized content (Statista Market Forecast, 2025).

Among the leading SVOD platforms, Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar have become prominent competitors. Netflix, launched in Indonesia in 2016, has established itself as the global leader with more than 280 million subscribers worldwide. Meanwhile, Disney+ Hotstar, introduced to the Indonesian market in 2020, quickly gained popularity by leveraging Disney's extensive content library and competitive pricing strategies (Disney Fandom, n.d.). However, despite their strong global presence, the platforms face unique challenges in Indonesia, particularly in balancing user experience, subscription affordability, and consumer loyalty.

Prior studies underscore that consumer behavior in streaming services is shaped by multiple factors. User experience—defined as the overall interaction quality between users and digital platforms—has been identified as a critical driver of satisfaction and loyalty (Saputra et al., 2023). Subscription price also plays a decisive role, as perceived fairness in pricing directly influences customer retention (Hidayati & Heryanda, 2022). Moreover, intention to subscribe,

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shaped by perceived value and consumer motivation, acts as a precursor to sustained satisfaction and loyalty (Leewattanawarakul, 2019; Evaratis et al., 2023). These findings suggest that success in the SVOD industry depends not only on content variety but also on how platforms deliver value through seamless experiences and fair pricing.

This study seeks to provide an empirical comparison of Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar in the Indonesian market by examining five key variables: user experience, subscription price, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. By analyzing consumer perceptions across these dimensions, the research aims to identify which platform holds a stronger position in winning the “stream war” in Indonesia. Beyond contributing to academic discussions on consumer behavior and digital media strategy, the findings are expected to provide managerial insights for streaming service providers to enhance competitiveness in emerging markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD) platforms has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly regarding the factors influencing consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Prior studies consistently highlight that user experience, pricing strategies, and subscription intentions play central roles in shaping long-term consumer behavior in digital media markets.

User experience (UX) is often defined as the overall cognitive and emotional response users develop when interacting with digital platforms (Buttle, 2009). In the streaming industry, UX includes factors such as content accessibility, ease of navigation, and interface design. Saputra et al. (2023) found that positive user experience significantly improves customer satisfaction and loyalty, mediated by trust. Similarly, Johannes et al. (2024) demonstrated that in Netflix’s Indonesian market, user experience and content variety directly enhance loyalty, either independently or through customer satisfaction. These findings suggest that UX is a decisive factor in differentiating competing streaming platforms.

Subscription prices are another critical determinant of consumer decisions. Price is not only a monetary cost but also reflects perceived fairness relative to value received (Armstrong & Kotler, 2023). Research by Hidayati and Heryanda (2022) confirmed that competitive pricing and e-service quality jointly influence Netflix users’ satisfaction in Indonesia. Lee et al. (2018) further indicated that escalating cable TV costs encouraged consumers to switch to streaming services, reinforcing the importance of affordability in media consumption choices.

Intention to subscribe reflects consumer motivation to engage with streaming services over time. According to Evaratis et al. (2023), perceived price fairness, promotion, and service quality significantly shape Indonesian users’ willingness to subscribe to Netflix. Similar evidence was reported by Kartika et al. (2023), who found that perceived quality and value strongly influenced intention to subscribe to Viu. These studies align with the notion that intention serves as a predictor of customer satisfaction and ultimately loyalty (Leewattanawarakul, 2019).

Finally, customer satisfaction and loyalty are widely recognized as outcomes of the combined effects of UX, price, and intention. Kotler et al. (2024) emphasized satisfaction as the cornerstone of long-term retention, where loyal consumers not only repurchase but also act as brand advocates. Khadka et al. (2017) noted that satisfaction is a reliable predictor of future

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consumption behavior, while Buttle (2009) distinguished between behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, both crucial for sustaining subscription-based services.

Taking together, the literature suggests that SVOD platforms succeed not merely by offering extensive content libraries but by delivering superior user experiences at fair prices while fostering strong subscription intentions. In the Indonesian context, where Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar dominate the market, examining these variables offers insights into how platforms can secure competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving digital entertainment landscape.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative and comparative research design to examine differences in consumer perceptions between Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar in the Indonesian market. Quantitative research is suitable for testing measurable constructions and identifying significant differences between groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through an online survey distributed to Indonesian consumers who had subscribed to both platforms within the past twelve months. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that respondents possessed relevant subscription experience, resulting in 180 valid responses, which is consistent with prior SVOD research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Johannes et al., 2024). The study focused on five variables—user experience, subscription price, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty—measured using Likert-scale items adapted from validated instruments in earlier studies (Saputra et al., 2023; Hidayati & Heryanda, 2022; Evaratis et al., 2023). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, where normality testing revealed non-normal distribution, thus the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was chosen as the primary analytical tool. This non-parametric method is widely recognized for its ability to test paired differences between two related samples without assuming normality (Gibbons & Chakraborti, 2011). This approach ensures robust and reliable insights into which platform—Netflix or Disney+ Hotstar—demonstrates stronger performance in user experience, affordability, satisfaction, and loyalty within the Indonesian SVOD landscape.

RESULTS

A. Tested Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the study evaluated the following hypotheses:

- H1** : Customers rate the user experience of Netflix higher than Disney+ Hotstar.
- H2** : Customers perceive Netflix's subscription price as more aligned with value compared to Disney+ Hotstar.
- H3** : Customers show stronger intention to subscribe to Netflix than Disney+ Hotstar.
- H4** : Customers report higher satisfaction after subscribing to Netflix compared to Disney+ Hotstar.
- H5** : Customers exhibit stronger loyalty toward Netflix compared to Disney+ Hotstar.

These hypotheses were tested using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is appropriate for comparing perceptions between two related samples with non-normal distributions (Gibbons & Chakraborti, 2011).

B. Respondents Profile

The study gathered valid responses from 180 Indonesian subscribers who had used both Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar within the previous twelve months. This purposive sampling approach ensured that respondents could provide comparative assessments between the two platforms. The descriptive analysis offers insights into demographic and behavioral characteristics of the participants, which are summarized below.

1. **Gender Distribution:** Respondents were almost evenly split by gender, with 52% male and 48% female. This balance reflects the relatively equal appeal of SVOD services across genders in Indonesia. Comparable studies (Siagian et al., 2022) also show that gender differences exert minimal influence on subscription behavior, suggesting that both male and female viewers are equally active consumers of streaming platforms.
2. **Age Groups:** The majority of respondents belonged to younger generations. Specifically, 41% were aged 18–25 (Gen Z), followed by 37% aged 26–35 (younger millennials). Meanwhile, 15% were aged 36–45, and only 7% were above 45 years old. This distribution confirms prior industry reports indicating that SVOD platforms are particularly popular among younger demographics who are more digitally native and open to experimenting with multiple subscriptions (Duarte, 2025).
3. **Occupational Background:** In terms of occupation, the largest segment was students (38%), followed by private-sector employees (33%), entrepreneurs/freelancers (18%), and government employees or others (11%). This profile reflects the increasing accessibility of streaming services among both younger consumers and working professionals, consistent with findings that flexible pricing and mobile accessibility broaden SVOD adoption in Indonesia (Statista Market Forecast, 2025).
4. **Subscription Behavior:** Most respondents had been subscribed to both Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar for at least 6–12 months, with a smaller group reporting over two years of continuous subscriptions. Notably, respondents indicated that they often switched between subscription tiers, with many maintaining basic Netflix plans alongside discounted Disney+ Hotstar bundles offered by mobile operators. This pattern highlights the fluidity of subscription behavior in Indonesia, where consumers frequently evaluate value-for-money before renewing.
5. **Content Preferences:** Content type emerged as another distinguishing factor. Respondents cited international movies and original series as the primary reasons for subscribing to Netflix, while Disney, Marvel, and local sports broadcasts were the main attractions of Disney+ Hotstar. These preferences suggest that Netflix appeals to users seeking variety and prestige programming, while Disney+ Hotstar attracts niche audiences loyal to Disney's brand portfolio.

C. Descriptive Analysis of Variables

The study examined five key variables: user experience, subscription price, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The descriptive analysis provided insights into mean values and respondent tendencies before hypothesis testing.

1. **User Experience:** Respondents rated Netflix higher in user experience, with a mean score of 4.32, compared to 3.87 for Disney+ Hotstar. The difference suggests that Netflix is

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perceived as more intuitive, with smoother navigation and stronger personalization algorithms. This supports prior evidence that user experience is a decisive factor in SVOD adoption (Saputra et al., 2023).

2. **Subscription Price:** Although Disney+ Hotstar offers a lower absolute subscription cost, respondents rated Netflix's perceived price fairness higher (mean = 4.05) than Disney+ Hotstar (3.74). This indicates that Netflix's broader content offering justifies its higher price point in the eyes of subscribers, consistent with Hidayati and Heryanda (2022), who argue that fairness and value outweigh absolute affordability in customer evaluations.
3. **Intention to Subscribe:** The intention to maintain or renew subscriptions was stronger for Netflix (mean = 4.21) than Disney+ Hotstar (mean = 3.85). Respondents indicated they were more likely to sustain Netflix subscriptions due to consistent release of global content and localized programming. In contrast, Disney+ Hotstar was often perceived as supplementary, primarily tied to specific franchises. This pattern reflects findings from Evaratis et al. (2023) that perceived service quality and value are predictors of subscription intention.
4. **Customer Satisfaction:** Netflix recorded a higher satisfaction score (mean = 4.28) compared to Disney+ Hotstar (mean = 3.89). Respondents cited Netflix's greater content diversity—including local Indonesian titles—as a driver of satisfaction. Disney+ Hotstar, though valued for family-friendly and Marvel content, was reported to offer limited variety. This result reinforces Kotler et al. (2024), who emphasize satisfaction as the cornerstone of retention.
5. **Customer Loyalty:** In terms of loyalty indicators—such as intention to recommend, frequency of repurchase, and resistance to switching—Netflix again outperformed Disney+ Hotstar, with a mean score of 4.19 versus 3.82. Subscribers demonstrated stronger willingness to advocate for Netflix, even amid rising costs. This finding mirrors Khadka et al. (2017), who argue that satisfied customers often become loyal advocates.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

| Variable | Netflix Mean | Disney+ Hotstar Mean | Interpretation |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|
| User Experience | 4.32 | 3.87 | Netflix offers superior usability and personalization. |
| Subscription Price | 4.05 | 3.74 | Netflix is seen as fairer despite higher cost. |
| Intention to Subscribe | 4.21 | 3.85 | Respondents more willing to renew Netflix. |
| Customer Satisfaction | 4.28 | 3.89 | Netflix provides broader content satisfaction. |
| Customer Loyalty | 4.19 | 3.82 | Netflix fosters stronger advocacy and retention. |

D. Data Quality Testing

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the quality of measurement items was assessed through validity and reliability tests.

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1. **Validity:** Construct validity was evaluated using Pearson's correlation coefficients between each item score and its corresponding construct score. All items for the five constructs—user experience, subscription price, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty—exhibited correlation coefficients above 0.30 and p-values below 0.05, indicating that all measurement items were valid (Hair et al., 2019).
2. **Reliability:** Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Results revealed that all constructs achieved coefficients above 0.70, confirming internal consistency across items. Specifically, user experience scored 0.874, subscription price 0.861, intention to subscribe 0.882, customer satisfaction 0.868, and customer loyalty 0.893. According to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994), values above 0.70 indicate strong reliability. Thus, all constructions were deemed reliable for further analysis.

E. Hypotheses Testing

Given the non-normal distribution of the data (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test $p < 0.05$), the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to evaluate paired differences between Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar across the five variables (Gibbons & Chakraborti, 2011).

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test)

| Hypothesis | Variable | Z-Value | p-Value | Result | Interpretation |
|------------|------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|--|
| H1 | User Experience | -7.852 | 0.000 | Supported | Netflix provides significantly better user experience. |
| H2 | Subscription Price | -6.421 | 0.000 | Supported | Netflix was perceived as fairer in value despite higher price. |
| H3 | Intention to Subscribe | -5.936 | 0.000 | Supported | Customers are more likely to renew Netflix subscriptions. |
| H4 | Customer Satisfaction | -7.104 | 0.000 | Supported | Netflix generates stronger satisfaction. |
| H5 | Customer Loyalty | -6.889 | 0.000 | Supported | Netflix cultivates higher loyalty than Disney+ Hotstar. |

The findings indicate that all five hypotheses were supported, with Netflix consistently outperforming Disney+ Hotstar across user experience, subscription price perception, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

- a. **H1 (User Experience):** Netflix's higher scores reflect its intuitive interface, personalized recommendations, and smoother streaming quality, aligning with Saputra et al. (2023) who emphasized user experience as a direct determinant of loyalty.
- b. **H2 (Subscription Price):** Despite Disney+ Hotstar offering cheaper subscription plans, Netflix was perceived as providing greater value for money. This supports Hidayati and Heryanda (2022), who argue that fairness and content value weigh more heavily than absolute affordability.
- c. **H3 (Intention to Subscribe):** Respondents indicated stronger intentions to continue subscribing to Netflix, consistent with Evaratis et al. (2023), who highlight perceived service quality as a driver of subscription intentions.

- d. **H4 (Customer Satisfaction):** Higher satisfaction with Netflix stemmed from its broader content library, including international blockbusters and localized Indonesian productions, reinforcing Kotler et al. (2024) that satisfaction is the cornerstone of retention.
- e. **H5 (Customer Loyalty):** Loyalty outcomes favored Netflix, with respondents more likely to recommend the platform and resist cancellation, consistent with Khadka et al. (2017), who link satisfaction directly to loyalty.

Overall, the results demonstrate that Netflix currently dominates the Indonesian streaming war, not because of price competitiveness, but due to its superior user experience and perceived value, which translate into higher satisfaction and loyalty. Disney+ Hotstar, while attractive for niche Disney content, struggles to match Netflix's breadth and platform quality.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide compelling evidence that Netflix consistently outperforms Disney+ Hotstar in the Indonesian market across all five variables: user experience, subscription price perception, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. This section discusses the reasons behind these findings, integrating theoretical perspectives and prior empirical research.

1. User Experience as a Differentiating Factor

The analysis confirmed that Netflix provides a significantly better user experience than Disney+ Hotstar. Several factors explain this outcome. First, Netflix has invested heavily in personalization algorithms and interface design, enabling it to deliver tailored recommendations that increase user engagement. This technological sophistication aligns with Saputra et al. (2023), who found that positive digital experiences directly enhance both satisfaction and loyalty through trust-building. Second, Netflix offers a seamless cross-device experience, allowing users to switch between smartphones, laptops, and smart TVs with minimal friction. By contrast, Disney+ Hotstar's interface has been criticized for navigation complexity and inconsistent subtitle quality, reducing perceived usability. This supports Kotler et al.'s (2024) notion of customer experience as an emotional and sensory offering that must remain consistent across touchpoints. In short, Netflix's superior user-centered design explains why H1 was supported.

2. Price Fairness versus Absolute Cost

The second major finding concerns subscription price. While Disney+ Hotstar offers lower absolute costs, respondents perceived Netflix as providing greater value for money. This indicates that perceived price fairness outweighs absolute affordability. As Hidayati and Heryanda (2022) demonstrated in their study of Netflix Premium users, customers are more satisfied when prices are aligned with quality and service reliability.

Netflix's vast content library—including international films, original productions, and Indonesian titles—creates a perception that the higher price is justified. Disney+ Hotstar, despite its affordability, is often seen as limited to Disney, Marvel, and Star Wars franchises. Consumers thus interpret Netflix's price as fairer because it maximizes entertainment utility. This reflects Armstrong and Kotler's (2023) definition of price as a representation of value.

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exchange, rather than a mere monetary figure. Hence, H2 was supported because value-based pricing strategies resonate more strongly with consumers than discount strategies.

3. Intention to Subscribe and Perceived Continuity

The third finding revealed that customers are more likely to maintain or renew their Netflix subscriptions than Disney+ Hotstar. This can be explained by content continuity and release strategies. Netflix employs a hybrid model, balancing binge releases with staggered weekly episodes, thereby sustaining subscriber engagement. Respondents reported that consistent global blockbusters and locally relevant Indonesian titles increased their willingness to continue subscriptions.

In contrast, Disney+ Hotstar depends heavily on Disney's intellectual properties, leading to a perception of content saturation once flagship titles are consumed. This limits long-term subscription motivation, especially among viewers who seek variety. These dynamics are consistent with Evaratis et al. (2023), who found that subscription intentions are influenced by perceived service quality and continuous content delivery. The findings support H3 and suggest that Netflix's diversified portfolio creates stronger subscription intentions than Disney+ Hotstar's franchise-focused strategy.

4. Customer Satisfaction through Content Diversity

Netflix scored higher in customer satisfaction, confirming H4. The primary reason is content diversity, which directly influences perceptions of fulfillment and value. Respondents highlighted Netflix's ability to cater to diverse tastes, including Hollywood films, international dramas, documentaries, and local productions. This aligns with Johannes et al. (2024), who demonstrated that variety of content mediates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Disney+ Hotstar, while strong in family-friendly programming, was often described as "too niche," particularly when compared to Netflix's expansive catalog. Moreover, technical issues such as occasional buffering and less robust dubbing/subtitling further reduced satisfaction levels. These findings support Kotler et al.'s (2024) principle that satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. Netflix's broad offering ensures that expectations are consistently exceeded, while Disney+ Hotstar often fails to sustain novelty and variety, thus explaining the satisfaction gap.

5. Loyalty as the Outcome of Satisfaction and Trust

Finally, loyalty levels were higher for Netflix, supporting H5. Customer loyalty is often a cumulative outcome of satisfaction, trust, and perceived value (Khadka et al., 2017). Respondents indicated that they were more willing to recommend Netflix to peers, renew subscriptions even in the face of rising costs, and resist switching to competitors.

This outcome is explained by Netflix's brand positioning as a global leader in streaming. Its reputation for innovation, consistency, and premium content builds both attitudinal loyalty (emotional attachment) and behavioral loyalty (repeat subscriptions), as defined by Buttle (2009). Disney+ Hotstar, on the other hand, is viewed more transactionally: users subscribe primarily for specific titles or franchises, and loyalty diminishes once these needs are satisfied. This transactional nature limits long-term brand commitment.

CONCLUSION

This study compared Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar in the Indonesian market across five critical variables: user experience, subscription price perception, intention to subscribe, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Using survey data from 180 respondents and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, the findings consistently demonstrated that Netflix outperformed Disney+ Hotstar in all dimensions. Netflix's competitive advantage lies not in offering the lowest prices, but in providing superior user experience, value-based pricing perceptions, diverse content portfolios, and strong satisfaction that translates into loyalty. By contrast, Disney+ Hotstar, while successful in attracting viewers through its flagship franchises, struggles to build long-term consumer commitment.

The results extend the literature on consumer behavior in subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD) markets in several ways. First, they reaffirm that perceived value and user experience are stronger predictors of satisfaction and loyalty than absolute price (Hidayati & Heryanda, 2022; Saputra et al., 2023). This challenges traditional economic models of consumer choice that prioritize cost minimization and supports behavioral theories that emphasize fairness, trust, and perceived utility (Peter & Olson, 2010). Second, the findings validate the mediating role of content diversity and service quality in shaping satisfaction, consistent with Johannes et al. (2024). The study highlights that brand loyalty in digital entertainment is not purely transactional but built on attitudinal attachment fostered by trust and consistent experiences (Buttle, 2009). Finally, the Indonesian context provides evidence for the cross-cultural applicability of global SVOD strategies. Younger consumers (Gen Z and millennials) emerged as dominant subscribers, reinforcing demographic theories of digital adoption, while also suggesting the need for localized strategies to sustain engagement in diverse markets.

For practitioners, the study offers several actionable insights. First, prioritize user experience design, Netflix's superiority in this dimension shows that seamless navigation, stable streaming quality, and personalized recommendations are non-negotiable features for maintaining competitive advantage. SVOD managers should invest in interface optimization and personalization algorithms to enhance perceived usability. Second, adopt value-based pricing strategies, the findings demonstrate that fairness and perceived value are more important than offering the lowest subscription fee. Disney+ Hotstar and other competitors should reconsider pricing strategies that emphasize affordability without sacrificing perceived quality. Bundling, flexible tiers, and loyalty discounts could be employed to improve price fairness perceptions. Third, expand and localize content portfolios, Netflix's success is partly driven by its ability to combine global blockbusters with locally relevant productions. Competitors should broaden their catalogs beyond niche franchises and prioritize local storytelling to sustain satisfaction and renewals in emerging markets. Finally, focus on building long-term loyalty. Loyalty in SVOD markets goes beyond repurchase; it includes advocacy and resistance to switching. Firms must design retention programs, community engagement initiatives, and exclusive releases to transform satisfied users into loyal advocates.

In conclusion, the "streaming war" in Indonesia is being won by Netflix, not because of lower pricing, but because it effectively integrates experience, fairness, diversity, and trust into its value proposition. For academics, the findings enrich the understanding of SVOD dynamics and consumer decision-making in digital contexts. For managers, they provide strategic insights into

how streaming platforms can strengthen competitiveness and cultivate sustainable growth in highly dynamic, content-driven markets.

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